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437 importance politically that it is supervised personally by the *mfumu*
643 himself, who watches meat cut up in front of him and gives the
644 orders for grain to be given out. A special steward is in charge
651 of his big personal granary and hands out baskets of grain each morning to the senior wives in charge of the feeding of the *umulasa* labourers, or the brewing of beer for any special purposes. The wives themselves have their own small personal granaries and cook dishes for the chief which he divides as he pleases,[1] or make presents of beer as they choose. All the three or four senior wives distribute hospitality to honoured guests in their own rights, and the *umukolo*, in particular, is required to be very punctilious in sending dishes of honour to travelling notables.

All the *bamukolo* I met were women of a good deal of organizing ability, capable of supervising the younger wives, arranging for the endless grinding and brewing required in the capital,[2] and the stirring of the huge pots of porridge to be served in enormous eating-baskets about eight times the size of an ordinary *icipe*. Any one who sits in the inside of an *umukolo's* hut during the late afternoon will know at once by the bustle, the concentrated faces, and the ring of waiting food-baskets that important and responsible work is on hand.

The whole of this system of distributing food is of course necessary to the chief if he is to make gardens and conduct tribal business through his councillors. But it is more than this. The giving of food, as in most African tribes, is an absolutely essential attribute of chieftainship, just as it is of authority in the village or household, and the successful organization of supplies at the capital seems to be associated in the Bemba mind with the security
344 and well-being of the whole tribe itself. This fact may be said to
786 be symbolized by the institution of the sacred kitchen (*kamitembo*) at the courts of the big chiefs (Citimukulu, Mwamba, and Nkula). From the outside the *kamitembo* looks like an ordinary hut, although specially well built. It is one of the sacred houses built by the *bakabilo* with special rites at the founding of a chief's new village. In fact it is the first to be built on the site. At Citimukulu's founding ceremony a special hereditary official, the Mwana Bwalya,

[1] The cooking of the chief's own food is usually done by the *umukolo* herself, or by some old woman specially appointed to the task, since the taboos protecting his fire from sex impurity are very strict.

[2] Chiefs' wives do not have to pile branches in the fields, but do very heavy grinding-work for beer-making and feeding the workers.

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crosses the Kalungu river near the capital at dead of night and has ritual intercourse with a woman given him for the purpose on the spot selected for the building of the *kamitembo*. Thus he 'warms the bush' (*ukukafye mpanga*) and leaves immediately afterwards secretly for his own village. On the place where his sleeping mat lay, one of the *bakabilo*, Cishika, the hereditary lighter of the chief's fire, must immediately make new fire by friction. This is the chief's sacred fire. The same patch of grass serves as site for the *kamitembo* house built a day or so after by all the *bakabilo* in concert after prayers by the Citimukulu and the burial of flour, salt, meat, and fish in the foundations. Once built the sacred hearth must be installed (*ukuteka ishiko*) and this is done as the climax of the long ceremonial founding of the village,[1] by killing a female sheep, and cooking it in the hut on the sacred fire with salt made from river grasses. This use of the traditional salt of the tribe is said to ensure that the land may be savoured (*calo cilowe*). Two big baskets are then cooked on the same hearth and carried to the chief, who tastes the porridge and meat and then hands it to all his *bakabilo* to eat. This is the way in which the 'spirits are put into the hut' (*ukubike mipashi mu ŋanda*), so that the life of the new village may begin.

After this the chief's fire burns perpetually in the *kamitembo* as also in two other sacred houses in the village and it remains under the special charge of the *umukolo*.[2] No person of sexual vigour may enter for fear of polluting the fire, and the chief's messages are carried there by small boys. Within the hut were piled in the old days the carrying poles on which tribute of beer and meat had been slung—signs of the chief's greatness —and the elephant tusks brought him. This is no longer done, but the beer required for big sacrifices to the land spirits is brewed in the *kamitembo*, and the chief and his head wife sleep here during this period, keeping sex taboos all the while. This is described as 'waiting for the yeast of the land' (*ukulindilo musunga ue calo*). Animals killed for sacrifices are also killed here, and the new crops cooked before being offered for the first-fruits are

[1] The ceremony of founding the last new village for the Citimukulu took from May to September 1933. I witnessed the first part of the ceremony but not the installation of the sacred hearth.

[2] The *umukolo* should only have ritual intercourse with the chief on ceremonial occasions and therefore as a person sexually pure remains a fit guardian of the tribal fire.

introducer of *Butwa* throughout these parts, and his name is famous in many a *Butwa* song."(1) Membership was open to all, irrespective of age and sex. The Ant-hill clan was particularly closely associated with the society. Refusal to join on the part of either of the spouses was a valid cause of divorce. A higher grade of elders (*mangulu*) in the society was constituted by members of both sexes who wore a special dress, bore special names and claimed to possess supernatural powers. Sessions were held annually or at longer intervals. The candidates, who had to pay an initiation fee, were given the *chibolo* concoction to drink and were paraded under an arch of bent saplings before entering the temple where sexual intercourse took place. Later they were given fetish horns by the elders of the society. Painted in stripes and smeared with white chalk they participated in the all-night dancing (imitative of the movements of the crested crane), the beer-drinking, and the festivities which followed. A good deal of sexual licence was allowed within the precincts of the temple. Members were bound to assist one another in sickness and need and were forbidden, under penalty of death, to divulge the society's secrets. *Butwa* performed fertility rites; it wielded considerable political power, so that the chiefs had to treat it with respect. It was feared by outsiders who charged it with terrorism and robbery. Special funerary ceremonies were performed at the death of members. Members of *Butwa* used an esoteric language, *Bubendo*; this was an argot formed by transposing syllables, changing initial letters and introducing obsolete words and compound metaphorical expressions. *Butwa* songs were sung by women members to the accompaniment of *chansa*, a musical instrument resembling the guitar. Apparently still flourishing in the first decade of the twentieth century, the society is said to have since died away.(2)

575 [586] [786] [302 535] [786] [766] [198] [525 534]

Blood-Brotherhood

Blood-brotherhood pacts were contracted between the natives and the Arab traders.(3) A marriage with a native girl, presumably a maternal relative of the blood-brother, was a usual concomitant of the ceremony.

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Guilds

Occupational guilds were known in the Chishinga(4) and Aushi country where iron-ore smelting and iron-working were hereditary crafts surrounded by a wealth of ritual. It is likely that they also functioned in the Luapula valley while the industry was alive, though no mention of this occurs in the available sources.

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POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

The Kazembe was formerly an absolute overlord, subordinate in name only to Muata Yamvo to whom he continued to send annual tribute.(5) Lukwesa Mpanga did not send any for three years. When several of his subjects were killed or savaged by wild animals this was interpreted as a punishment for his neglect. He made amends by sending a convoy with slaves, salt and copper.(6)

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(1) Campbell, op.cit.
(2) Brelsford, 1, 1946, p.14.
(3) Livingstone, II, p.258.
(4) Brelsford, 3, 1949.
(5) Valdez, II, p.174.
(6) Pogge, 1880.